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# Honor, Respect & Responsibility (HR2) Character Education Project

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Project Abstract	.....	5
Absolute Priority	.....	7
Project Narrative.....	.....	9
Selection Criteria 1	.....	10
Selection Criteria 2	.....	23
Selection Criteria 3	.....	25
Selection Criteria 4	.....	30
Narrative response to GEPA	.....	31
Budget & Narrative	.....	33
Assurances & Certifications		
Appendix		
Exhibit A: Resume`- Key Personnel	.....	i
Exhibit B: Value Indicators of Montana Tribal Cultures	.....	xi
Exhibit C: Samples of Anglo-Generated Materials v. Bi-Cultural Materials	.....	xxvii
Exhibit D: Essential Understanding about Montana Indians	.....	xxxv
Exhibit E: Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education	.....	xxxvii
Exhibit F: Risk Indicators of Indian Students in Montana Schools	.....	xxxix
Exhibit G: Montana Behavior Initiative (MBI)	.....	xlvi
Exhibit H: MCA 20-1-501: Indian Education for All & Montana Indian Education Montana Accreditation Indian Education Benchmarks and Standards	.....	li
Exhibit I: Bibliography	.....	lix



**Montana Office of Public Instruction**  
**Honor, Respect & Responsibility (HR2) Character Education Project**

Montana's Honor, Respect & Responsibility (HR2) Project proposes to address the programmatic barriers that impeded total success of the Montana Character Education Project (MCEP), our first attempt to develop a state character education initiative. Both initiatives target American Indian youth in grades K-8, although the program can easily be adopted statewide. The primary reason for the sub-group priority is that state data confirms that Indian students are significantly left behind in education achievement. As a small ethnic group, there is also very little research available upon which to build strategies to address the problem. MCEP attempted to close the disparity gap through character education as part of school reform from the following research citation: "Most teachers of American Indian students 'assume' that all their students (irrespective of the students' racial, ethnic, or cultural background) want to model their lives in conjunction with traditional conventions and belief systems promoted in most schools....and take for granted that all students hold a White, American, middle-class reference group identity." (Marshall 2002)

This is not the goal of Indian education in Montana, or of most parents of Indian children. "Culture is not checked in at the door; it enters the classroom; culture is not checked in at the door; at times it takes precedence; culture is not checked at the door, it is a lifestyle." (Barfield & Charette, 2002) The goal in Indian communities is to create a school system that will preserve and protect tribal cultural traditions and values, **and** also provide a learning environment where children develop competency of those skills necessary to achieve success in the mainstream White, middle-class school culture, too.

It is therefore the goal of the Honor, Respect and Responsibility project to increase American Indian student success in Montana by building on what we have learned to implement and evaluate a character education program that: 1) is bi-culturally relevant, 2) can be integrated into classroom instruction, 3) is aligned to state standards, and 4) can be integrated into existing school reform efforts.



## **ABSOLUTE PRIORITY**

**To design and implement a character education program that: 1) can be integrated into classroom instruction and be consistent with State academic content standards, and 2) can be carried out in conjunction with other educational reform efforts.**

1. Montana's Honor Respect & Responsibility (HR2) Project requires each LEA to submit a competitive proposal to the SEA which includes assurances that they will infuse the character education program into classroom instruction using a school reform model. Each project must agree to participate in all state-sponsored character education (CE) professional development activities which are designed to facilitate integration, maintain documentation of the integration and collect data documenting the implementation and effectiveness of the program. LEA application proposals to the SEA will include a section outlining their planned activities and how they align to state standards and MCA 20-1-501: Indian Education for All.(Exhibit H) The SEA will award sub-grants only to those projects that meet the criteria. The evaluator will document integration and its effectiveness annually.
2. To be an eligible participant of Montana's HR2 Project, LEA proposals will state how their character education project activities support local school reform efforts outlined in their District's 5-Year Plan. These plans are revised annually to address data documenting academic achievement, school climate, student risk behaviors, accreditation, academic yearly progress, quality of teaching staff, parental involvement, participation in special education programs, retention of administration and staff, and student dropout rates, among other indicators. The goal of the 5-Year Plan is to promote school reform activities developed around data driven decision-making. Implementation of any school initiative, including character education, must complement these efforts.

## B. NARRATIVE

### **Montana's Honor, Respect & Responsibility Project**

**Goal: To create respectful family, school and community environments which enable all students to develop the bi-cultural qualities of character required to attain academic success and the skills required to be successful students, citizens and productive members of their community.**

In their article "Research Based Character Education", Berkowitz and Bier (2004) state that: "Character education has been demonstrated to be associated with academic motivation and aspirations, academic achievement, prosocial behavior, bonding to school, prosocial and democratic values, conflict-resolution skills, moral-reasoning maturity, responsibility, respect, self-efficacy, self-control, self-esteem, social skills, and trust in and respect for teachers". The authors also state, however, that actual scientific research as to the effectiveness of character education is hardly substantial. It has only been over the past 35 years that the body of research has developed. The authors then summarize from the existing body of research, the conditions under which character education programs have been shown to be effective.

With focus on those research conditions, the Montana SEA, in partnership with 10 LEAs, proposes implementation of Honor, Respect & Responsibility (or HR2), our character education (CE) initiative targeting Montana's American Indian population. Montana recognizes that there are many existing quality CE programs available. However, our first attempt to incorporate character education into schools with high populations of Indian students, forced us to recognize the shortcomings of the effectiveness of Anglo-based programs in meeting the unique needs of our American Indian children. There are five primary reasons for this problem:

1. Most cultures worldwide have historical basis in tribal structuring. However, unlike mainstream American population groups, Montana's Plains tribes still maintain that social, political and economic structure, creating a unique lifestyle that must be addressed when proposing educational reform.



2. Federal Indian policies, including the ward relationship over Indian people and past practices of the boarding school system impact the lives of Indian people in a manner foreign to other American citizens. The impact is outwardly subtle, but is defined by a very real resistance and suspicion toward education in general and values-focused education in particular. (see Exhibit B)
3. This situation is exacerbated when Anglo-based program materials promoting values clarification appear to conflict with traditional cultural practices of Montana tribes, such as “counting coup”, cooperative learning, and parenting roles. (see Exhibit C)
4. In addition to providing educational programs for all Montana students that are rigorous and based on state standards, the Montana Constitution holds schools accountable for protecting the cultural integrity of Native tribal traditions. MCA 20-1-501 codifies this responsibility in mandating that ALL Montana children be taught about Montana tribes in a culturally responsible manner that protects the cultural and historical integrity of the tribes. (Exhibit H)
5. Montana’s American Indian children are not only responsible for developing character consistent with good citizenship by state and national standards, but also have a cultural responsibility to their tribes.

Though faced with barriers in implementing Anglo-based programming during our previous CE initiative, we were, however, able to determine several practices that definitely worked in Indian country. These practices, solidly based on Lickona’s *Eleven Principles of Character Education*, are also completely consistent with the research cited by Berkowitz & Bier (2004) on research-based character education. It is these effective practices that Montana proposes to test as the HR2 Project under this proposal and thereby promote the goal of the US Department in Education to create a culture of achievement through development of safe schools and strong character.

#### **Selection Criteria 1: QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES (30 points)**

**Project Need:** Montana's Honor Respect & Responsibility (HR2) Project proposes to address the programmatic barriers that impeded success of the Montana Character Education Project (MCEP), Montana's first attempt to develop a state character education initiative. Both initiatives target Montana's American Indian population, although the program can, and hopefully will, be adopted statewide. There exists a variety of reasons for this priority: existing state data confirms that this sub-group population is being left behind in educational achievement; Indian schools in Montana had the greatest difficulty in meeting NCLB adequate yearly progress goals; Indian students are disproportionately identified for special education; Indian students disproportionately drop out of school before high school graduation; Indian students are underrepresented in institutions of post secondary education; Indian students are identified on the SEA Risk Behavior Survey as disproportionately participating in risky behaviors; parents of Indian students disproportionately live in families identified as economically impoverished; Indian students disproportionately report being stereotyped and/or harassed because of their race; Indian students as a subgroup, have been identified as those most at risk in this state for incidents of suicide and drug and alcohol abuse; the Indian population is disproportionately represented in the legal system, including the juvenile justice system. (see Exhibit F for risk factors)

**Preliminary findings addressing the need:** Efforts under the MCEP to address this disparity through development of character education as part of school reform efforts have produced mixed results. The efforts focused on implementation of Anglo-based, researched, character education programming, theorizing that such materials would assist students in bridging cultural differences that impede academic and social achievement. However, preliminary data analysis appears to confirm only limited success. Community-wide committees made up of school personnel, parents, business representatives, students, students with disabilities, and tribal representatives formed LEA partnership groups, evaluated and selected a research-based model for their LEA from a wide array of programs, and incorporated traditional community values into those programs. All programs

fell short of expectations though. An explanation of why this occurred can be deduced from the following research citation:

**Most teachers of American Indian students “assume that all their students (irrespective of the students’ racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds) want to model their lives in conjunction with traditional conventions and belief systems promoted in most schools....and take for granted that all students hold a White, American, middle-class reference group identity.” (Marshall 2002)**

This is NOT the goal of Indian education in Montana, or of most parents of Indian children. “Culture is not checked in at the door; it enters the classroom; culture is not checked at the door; at times it takes precedence; culture is not checked at the door; it is a lifestyle.” (Barfield & Charette 2004) The goal of most Indian communities is to create a school system that will preserve and protect individual tribal cultural traditions and values, **and** also provide a learning environment where children develop competency of those skills necessary to achieve success in the mainstream White, middle-class culture too.

Although the data collection and analysis of the MCEP has not been completed, preliminary outcomes confirm that Indian students enter the school with a set of values steeped in traditions other than Anglo. In many cases their values conflict with Anglo values. Data also confirms that the majority of Indian children live in poverty and are not familiar with the values of middle class cultures. They enter school handicapped by unawareness of the unwritten rules and values of the middle class school system as well as conflict with the written rules based on cultural value differences. Existing model character education programs do not adequately address this issue. We believe, however, that with increased community involvement and guidance in “what works” in character education, we can create a character education program that will address this issue while also maintaining mainstream value integrity. We will teach Montana’s Indian students participating in Honor, Respect and Responsibility (HR2), those rules and values that will help them succeed in White middle-class society while also growing as traditional Indian people of good character. All children, given opportunity,

motivation, quality instruction, and desire can learn the rules and become winners in both cultures under this school reform model. Indian children will gain competency consistent with the goals of character education as defined by the school system steeped in the White middle class culture and values; Indian and White children in Montana will through HR2 activities develop those skills defined as being individuals of good character while also learning about Indian cultures and values. The model is formulated on a three prong criteria: it meets State academic standards; it is based on the State's "Essential Understandings" of Montana Indians developed to meet the requirement of MCA 20-1-501 (see Exhibit D); and it promotes character education utilizing research based principles.

**Plan of Action Criteria: Quality of proposed project a) describing development, implementation and strengthening of programs focused on character education within existing curriculum, and b) describing how activities improve the quality of instruction.**

Successful practices were infused into the plan for **Montana's Honor, Respect & Responsibility Project (HR2)** which will expand on what we have learned and focus on what we determined "worked", utilizing as a framework, Lackona's *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* (see Exhibit E) and the eleven critical "what works" factors outlined by Marvin Berkowitz and Melinda Bier in their article, *Research-Based Character Education (2004)*. Berkowitz and Bier identified the factors from the research of a grant from the John Templeton Foundation, supplemented by a review of the work of others compiled by Solomon, Watson, and Battistich (2001). The **"what works" factors** correlate to Tom Lackona's principles and address the implementation plan and quality of instruction criteria required in this application. The factors will therefore be used as quality control for the HR2 proposal. Each activity proposed in Montana's HR2 Project will include a reference by corresponding number to the primary factor(s) being addressed by the activity. (Example: ...participate in MBI (Berkowitz & Bier factors 1,4,6 & 7))

**“What Works” in Effective Character Education (CE)**  
**Berkowitz & Bier (2004)**

#	Factor	Examples & reference cited by Berkowitz & Bier
1	Quality of implementation	Fidelity to implementation including professional development (PD) and mobility issues; exposure effects outcomes (Solomon, Watson & Battistich 2001)
2	Multifaceted character education	CE is multifaceted; models incorporating classroom management, curricular, social skill building, parent involvement and school reform are desired (Hawkins et al. 1992)
3	Student bonding to school	Emotional attachment to school is critical mediating factor in CE (Berkowitz & Bier forthcoming; Osterman 2000); attachment is a predictor of risk behavior (Besnick et al. 1997)
4	Leadership is key	School principal's role is essential (DeRoche & Williams 2001; Lickona 1991); school leaders must commit to the Why (head), How (hand) and motivation (heart) to lead a CE initiative effectively (Nance et al. 2003)
5	Character education is good education	CE is based on central tenets on quality education; shared governance, interpersonal respect, collaborative learning, student reflection, application of course content to real life; leads to academic gain (Battistich & Hong 2003)
6	Character education is prevention	CE programs reduce violence and substance use (Battistich et al. 2000); reduce risky behavior and promote positive character development & life skills (Kan, Greenberg & Walls 2003)
7	Staff development	Staff must know the initiative and believe in it to implement it (Kam, Greenberg & Walls 2003)
8	Direct skill building	Training of interpersonal, emotional and moral skills is critical to effective CE (Hawkins et al. 2001)
9	Parent involvement	Parental involvement promotes academic achievement and character development (Patrikakou et al. forthcoming)
10	Student reflection	Moral reasoning is promoted by peer moral discourse (Berkowitz 1985)
11	Adults as role models	Students imitate what significant adults in their lives model; positive modeling promotes increased self regulation (Ryan & Patrick (2001)

Partners of the Montana Character Education Project (MCEP) met during their spring conference to compile a list of recommendations from their LEA Partnership Advisory Councils (PAC) and to identify the components from each project site that met with most success. The MCEP LEA Partnership Councils also developed a partial list of cultural factors that have a direct connection to value conflict with character programs based on White, American, middle-class school systems. Below is a brief sampling of that list: (Appendix B provides more detail on the barriers and validates the reasoning behind many of the recommended activities such as the parents' advocacy lounge and character education room.)

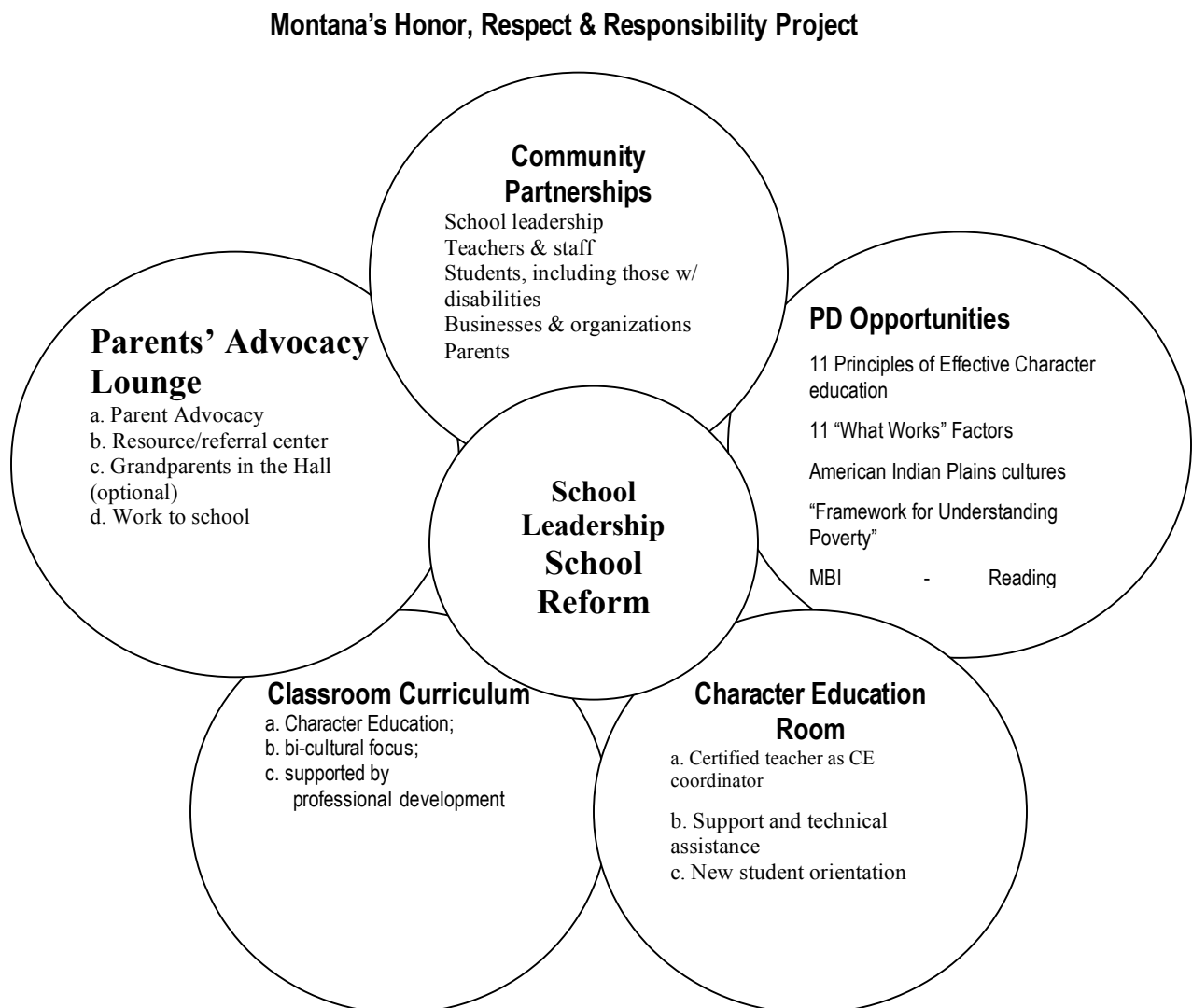
1. Montana's plains tribes were nomadic people. They remain nomadic. The lifestyle often conflicts with traditional school grading and attendance policies.
2. Most Americans acknowledge education as the path to success. However, historically, education in Indian country was used to quash tribal culture and traditions (Assimilation Policy). (social impact: Birchard 1970; Krush, Bjork, Sindell, & Nelle 1966; federal policy: Ryan, 1962; Trennert, 1988) The result is that many Indian parents today, though recognizing the benefits of a good education, are also suspect of educational institutions and hold negative perceptions of educational systems.
2. Indian children were removed from homes to attend boarding schools at such early ages, that today they lack positive parenting models. Family structures and clan systems were dismantled, and the surrogate models found at boarding schools were dysfunctional at best, destructive at worst.
3. Tribal plains groups disproportionately live in impoverished conditions. The educational ramifications of generational poverty are well documented.
4. Plains tribal cultures prefer cooperative rather than competitive learning (Miller and Thomas 1972). Conflict with mainstream values occurs when materials dismiss cooperative learning as an effective educational tool or equate it with cheating.

5. Self recognition as a personal goal in many plains tribes is not promoted over the common good of the group, a value that can conflict with capitalistic ideology and middle class values.
6. Most Anglo generated programs focus on values as the difference between right and wrong. Using this standard, one component of the traditional honor of counting coup could be classified as stealing in mainstream materials. Indian students provided these materials as learning tools therefore perceive their cultural traditions as being bad, wrong, or immoral.
7. American Indians are also overrepresented in the legal system and the Anglo punitive response to crime is counter to traditional responses based on restorative justice, a problematic situation when teaching Indian children about fairness or justice using Anglo-generated materials. (Ross 1998)
8. The parenting role of grandparents and the clan system differs from the concept of parenting in White middle-class cultures.
9. Plains cultures tend to focus on the present rather than the future, making goal setting a difficult task.
10. Direct eye contact in Plains Indian cultures is perceived as aggressive. White middle-class values programs teach that eye-to-eye contact is symbolic of truthfulness.

These examples are not intended to be all-inclusive, but serve only to highlight some of the intricate challenges our community partners faced when charged with the task of implementing research-based character education programs, which tend to be Anglo-value driven. In effect, it was the conclusion of the LEA partnership committees, and supported by the state partnership committee, that implementing Anglo-value based programs for Indian students was commiserate with sending a team of children to a basketball tournament, only to discover instead that they are scheduled for a goobleball tournament. Team success, respect and reputation are on the line, but the coach and the team are clueless as to the rules of the game. HR2 focuses on the ability of children learn the rules of many very different games if given opportunity, motivation, instruction and support. Some may excel in one sport over the other; some may choose one sport the other; and some may even prefer to

participate as a player in one and an observer of the other, but in all circumstances they learn to understand the dedication to the rules and practices of each and know what is required to win. Education is a team effort; all members of the team need to know the rules under which each will be held accountable and therefore judged to be good players.

To meet the identified challenges, Montana's HR2 project has developed a character education school reform model designed as follows:





## Summary of Program Components

**School Leadership/School Reform:** Strong leadership drives effective education reform efforts. HR2 school reform efforts require that leadership understands the How, Why and Heart of this character education initiative. (factor 4) The principal of each LEA will attend HR2 professional development training as a member of the school team and work with the character education coordinator and CPC to provide support to teachers and staff as well as continuity for the reform efforts. (factors 1,4,7) It is also important that students and parents “see” leaders model reform efforts (factors 1,4,9,11)

**Character Education Room:** (from MCEP “best practices”) Each participating LEA will create a Character Education Room staffed by a certified teacher. The room provides many reform services as well as addressing cultural barriers to success.

- It replaces in-school suspension. Disciplinary referral forms list the infraction committed by the student PLUS the character virtue that the student needs to practice to correct the behavior. Suspension from the class isn't punitive, but restorative. The student also has access to a certified teacher so (s)he can continue with class work and does not fall even further behind academically.
- Students are able to self-select time out in the character room, an intervention practice that also promotes direct skill building. (factors 1,2,5,6,8,10)
- New students spend their first two weeks in the character education room where they learn the school rules, work on assignments for the class they will enter, are assessed for special services, and are assigned a peer mentor. When the child leaves for the regular classroom, (s)he understands the rules of the classroom and the work, has friends in the classroom through the mentor, and understands that he has an adult contact for resources should he have trouble in the classroom. (factors 1,2,3,6,8)
- The character education room teacher also serves as the HR2 coordinator and provides support and technical assistance to school staff and the LEA Partnership Council. (factors 1,5,7)

**Community Partnership:** Each LEA will form a Community Partnership Council (CPC) comprised of parents, community members, representatives of organizations and businesses, tribal leaders, elders, teachers and staff, and students (including students with disabilities). The committees will meet monthly to assess progress, recommend activities, and provide support for activities. (factors 1,2,4,8,11)

**Parents' Advocacy Lounge:** Volunteer parents are trained to serve as peer advocates 1) for parents with school concerns and 2) for parents with new students entering the school. The lounge offers coffee with a peer parent to discuss problems, find solutions, and access referral resources. (factors 2,3,4,5,6,8,9) Through the Advocacy Lounge, LEAs may also host a "Work to School" program (similar to 1<sup>st</sup> Day of School, but incorporates the Plain Indian extended family concept) and/or the "Grandparents in the Halls" program, where grandparents provide everything from safety pins to Band-Aids; hugs to scoldings. Grandparents in Indian cultures were traditional educators. This option provides Indian students with access to traditional support venues and brings Indian people to the school in positive ways. (factors 1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,11)

**Professional Development:** Professional development, recommended by the MCEP schools and the CPCs, is on-going. SEA sponsored PD is listed under selection criteria B in this section. The character education coordinator organizes local PD needs (factors 1,2,5,7,9) including those for school volunteers and chaperones.

**Curriculum:** Bi-cultural, values based character education curriculum is being compiled as the last activity under the MCEP project. A very simple explanation of the concept follows: Through interaction with the LEA Partnership Councils, a list of virtues is developed for study throughout the academic year. A creative symbol of each character virtue is crafted as the student studies the virtue, reads about the virtue from character education books compiled for this activity, practices the virtue, identifies and reflects on the virtue and finally masters the virtue according to coursework standards. When mastery is achieved, the student places the creative symbol into his or her parfleche bag (a traditional Indian "suitcase") which was created and decorated

by the student to represent that student's culture, gender, dreams, gifts, etc. At the end of the year, the student leaves with his or her "suitcase" of symbolic character values. The curriculum is very easily infused into existing curriculum, is closely tied to MBI philosophy (a classroom management program designed by the SEA Special Education Division) and is adaptable to reflect the values many cultures. Activities and lessons can be expanded for guest speakers, individual authentic learning projects, and cross-curricular activities. (factors 1,2,3,5,6,7,8,10)

All components of the HR2 model inter-relate. The independent evaluator will visit each LEA at least once annually to assess the effectiveness of this relationship as well as the individual components. A summary of his findings is submitted to the SEA for use in modifying goals in the school's 5-Year Plan.

#### ***Criteria 1.A: Equal Access of Underrepresented Population***

Montana will match the 5 MCEP LEAs with 5 new LEAs for implementation of the new character education program, Honor, Respect & Responsibility (HR2). The MCEP cites include: **Browning School District**, located on the Blackfeet Reservation; **Heart Butte School District**, also located on the Blackfeet reservation; **Box Elder School District**, located just off the Rocky Boy Reservation; **Great Falls School District**, an urban LEA; and **Wakina Sky**, an Indian owned non-profit contracted by the **Helena School District** to deliver Title VII services to Indian children. (see Exhibit C for sample activities)

These LEAs will mentor new projects selected through a competitive application process conducted by the SEA. All state schools are eligible; however, priority points will be awarded to schools with high numbers of American Indian students. The state may consider the geographic distribution of the projects and LEA demographics in addition to the rank order of the applicants. The application requires each applicant to state how it intends to ensure participation of all sub-categories of students, including students with disabilities as well as outline their recruitment and hiring procedures addressing access for staff funded by the grant.

#### ***Criteria 1.B: Professional Development Activities***

Professional Development plans under HR2 fall into 2 major categories: planning year pre-implementation and on-going implementation

**Planning Year/Pre-Implementation:** 1) A recommendation of project Community Partnership Councils under the MCEP emphasized a need for professional development alternatives to curriculum, systems management, expectations and definitions of good character traits based solely in White middle class values. One MCEP LEA hosted training on Ruby Payne's *Framework of Poverty* (2003) with great success and long-lasting positive effects. Training extended to partners and was opened to social services, housing projects, civic organizations, businesses, tribal leaders, and law enforcement. They discovered that this tool not only provided a foundation for understanding the motivation and values of groups living in poverty, but also provided a format conducive to discussion of discrimination issues. HR2, based on the recommendation of the CPCs will provide this training in year one-planning. (factors 1,3,4,7) Ruby Payne has agreed to include Montana in her national tour. The character room teacher at each HR2 cite will attend follow-up facilitator training, allowing this individual to provide in-house PD school-wide, as well as technical support as the project moves into implementation. (factors 1,7) In year two, as the school begins implementation and testing, the character education room teacher will provide training for all school staff during PIR days (factor 1,7). Schools will document commitment to the professional development in their application packet.

2) MCEP partnered with the Montana Behavior Initiative (MBI), a classroom behavior management, self-skills development program developed by the SEA Special Education Division. MBI hosts a summer PD program. Each HR2 LEA will commitment to participate at MBI in their application and identify a team to attend which must include the school principal, character room teacher and at least one member from the CPC (factors 1,2,3,4,7,8). The educational/behavioral philosophy of MBI is: if you expect it, teach it; if you teach it, practice it; as you practice it, model it. (see Exhibit G for information on MBI)

3) In May of Year I planning, the SEA will host a 2-day planning conference. The school principal, character room teacher, and at least one member of the local CPC from each HR2 project are required to attend. Participants will receive training by the SEA Partnership Council in programs such as Learn & Serve, Grandma's in the Hall, Work to School, and HR2. Attendees will explore venues for promoting student voice and life skills. Tribal Elders and tribal college teacher preparation professionals will assist in presentation of the HR2 cultural curriculum infusion. (all factors) Teams will work with SEA personnel and tribal mentors to develop a plan of action specific to their local sub-grant.

### **On-going implementation**

1) The character room teacher will utilize the train the trainer model to provide PD opportunities in the school throughout the project in addition to providing support to classroom teachers as the project proceeds. The character room teacher will also coordinate bi-weekly staff meetings to increase morale, provide support, problem solve and identify best practices. (factors 1,4,5,7)

2) The SEA character education director will visit each LEA at least twice annually to provide technical assistance and monitoring support. (factors 1,4,7)

3) Tribal elders and tribal colleges will be encouraged to participate in Learn & Serve projects and as classroom support to promote cultural awareness and integrity. (factors 1,3,7,11)

4) The HR2 local partnership councils (CPCs) will meet monthly to assess progress, identify PD needs, recommend program modifications and plan support activities.

### ***Criteria 1.C: Participation of Appropriate Partners***

1) Each HR2 LEA will establish a local Partnership Council (CPC) comprised of school personnel, students (including students with disabilities) community representatives, tribal elders, higher education representatives, and tribal government to plan activities, evaluate progress and make recommendations. A character education SEA Partnership Council was established under the MCEP project and will continue in their

advisory and support role during this project. Council participants include representatives from the following SEA programs: Administration, 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Learn & Serve, Advanced Placement, Adult Basic Education, Indian Education, GEAR UP, Special Education, MBI, Title I, Vocational Education, Safe & Drug Free Schools, Health Enhancement, School Equity, and Accreditation & Standards. The Montana Education Association, Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education, and Montana Indian Education Association participate, as do representatives from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education including the director of Minority Achievement, Director of Minority Access and TRIO. The group meets quarterly.

2) Each HR2 LEA is encouraged to establish partnerships with local businesses and organizations to facilitate community support. One MCEP project partnership led to job training for students. The strategy was highly successful during the MCEP proposal and is supported as a recommendation of the LEA Partnership Councils. Extra points will be awarded to application packet proposals that include such partnership strategies. (factors 5,6,8)

3) A strategy also recommended by the MCEP partnership councils encourages LEAs to form partnerships with local institutions of higher education, including tribal colleges. Several such partnerships created classroom field experiences for education students, facilitated infusion of character education into college teacher training programs, promoted use of local tribal cultural values in curriculum development, and provided students with positive role models through use of college students as classroom tutors. Extra points will be awarded to application proposals that include such partnership strategies (factors 2,11)

### **Selection Criteria 2: QUALITY OF KEY PERSONNEL (10 points)**

*Criteria 2.A: Extent to which the applicant encourages employment of persons traditionally underrepresented groups based on race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability.*

Montana's Indian population is traditionally underrepresented in employment. Disproportionate rates of college attendance by Native people contribute to the problem. However, staffing in Montana's MCEP project

demonstrates our ability to find highly qualified Indian staff. HR2 will continue to prioritize recruiting from the American Indian community throughout all levels of management of the project.

<b>Ethnicity of existing LEA staff</b>					
	Browning	Heart Butte	Box Elder	Great Falls	Helena
Project coordinator	Native	Native	Non-Native	Non-Native	Native
Administrator	Native	Native	Non-Native	Native	Native

*Criteria 2.B The qualifications of key project personnel.*

Director: The state director has more than 20 years experience in educational programs, including teaching and administrative experience in schools, the University system and the Tribal system. Ms. Azure serves on various advisory boards impacting the American Indian education community, has worked as a Title IX equity and Title VII Indian education consultant, was administrator for a large OJJDP youth justice program, has provided a host of professional development trainings to schools, school boards, and community groups, and is particularly active in issues that effect Montana Indians. She has conference presentation experience at the local, state, and national level. The Director has a BS degree in Education and a Masters in Adult & Higher Education, with an emphasis in minority education. As a recipient of a Kellogg fellowship, she studied learning/teaching styles of Montana's Indian population.

Independent Evaluator: Montana's HR2 project is very fortunate to have recruited Dr. Patrick Weasel Head as our independent project evaluator. Dr. Weasel Head brings the resources of the University of Montana to Montana's HR2 project and is well versed in educational research. An enrolled member of the Blackfeet tribe, Dr. Weasel Head is also well versed in Plains cultural traditions and values and is one of only a handful of evaluators who could assess the authenticity of cultural materials produced by the project and the nuisances of their impact on the unique sub-group population. Complementing his work as a researcher and evaluator, Dr.

Weasel Head possesses experience as a teacher, counselor and program administrator. Dr. Weasel Head received his doctorate from the University of Oregon. (See Exhibit A for resumes of key staff)

LEA Coordinators: A project requirement of all LEA coordinators is that they be SEA teacher certified, possess knowledge of the foundations of character education, knowledge of Montana tribal cultures, and demonstrate bi-cultural competency. The coordinators are employed by the LEA; however, the LEA will sign assurances with the HR2 project documenting that the coordinator meets the criteria.

### **Selection Criteria 3: QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN (30 points)**

The hypothesis of Montana's HR2 project is that character education focused on bi-cultural competency will 1) improve school climate 2) increase student academic achievement and 3) increase school satisfaction of students (including students with disabilities), parents, school personnel and the community.

**Goal: To create respectful family, school and community environments that enable all students to develop the bi-cultural qualities of character required to attain academic success and the skills required to be successful students, citizens and productive members of their community.**

*Criteria 3.A Adequacy of the plan to achieve the objectives of the project*

#### **Year One-Planning**

Objective: LEAs will participate in planning strategies in partnership with their CPC that promote implementation of a character education program (HR2) that aligns with state standards, is bi-culturally focused, is infused into existing school reform efforts and will be integrated into existing classroom curriculum.

Activity 1: By October, the State Director will complete a state competitive grant process, identifying 10 HR2 participants (participants of the MCEP project will receive priority mentorship points and priority points will also be awarded to schools with high American Indian populations.)

Activity 2: By December 31, each LEA will hire a HR2 character education coordinator who possesses state teacher certification and is knowledgeable of Plains Indian cultures. The coordinator, principal and the CPC will



facilitate all HR2 goals and activities. The coordinator provides on-going technical assistance and support to the school and community throughout the project, is responsible for carrying out the goals of LEA project and character education room and supervises the parent volunteers.

Activity 3: By February 1, the coordinator and school principal are responsible for forming the Community Partnership Council (CPC), ensuring that the Council includes parents, teachers, students (including students with disabilities), and representatives from businesses and organizations, tribal government, tribal elders and higher education (including students and staff from state and tribal teacher training programs). The CPC is an active participant throughout planning and implementation of the HR2 program, makes recommendations for improvement or modification based on research and data analysis, and extends the walls of the school through partnership activities such as hosting awards activities for recognition of students demonstrating outstanding examples of good character.

Activity 4: By July 30, professional development activities will be completed on the bi-cultural HR2 character education model as measured by LEA team participation in the following:

- The state 2-day orientation/professional development workshop
- PD training of the HR2 character education cultural curriculum
- PD on Understanding the Culture of Poverty
- PD on the Montana Behavior Initiative (MBI) classroom management model

Activity 5: By August 15, each LEA will have developed an HR2 Implementation Plan of Action as measured by production of a written plan outlining strategies for infusion of HR2 teaching and learning strategies into classroom curriculum and management plans, inclusion of planned activities into the LEA's 5-Year Plan, and creation of strategies for community participation at all stages of development and implementation.

Activity 6: By October 2005 each LEA will submit planning year K-8 baseline rubric data (such as data indicators on discipline referral rates; student academic achievement; mobility; risk behavior; participation in

extracurricular activities; staff, parental and community involvement; student and staff morale; and school climate satisfaction indicators) to the independent evaluator for use in establishing pre-test benchmarks.

## **Years Two & Three**

Objective: LEAs will implement HR2 bi-cultural character education program strategies in partnership with their Community Partnership Council.

Activity 1: Beginning in school year two, the LEA and partners will follow the plan of action developed under year one planning activities to implement the HR2 bicultural character education program which will:

- Increase student success as measured by academic achievement, lower dropout rates, lower risk behavior, lower disciplinary referrals;
- Increase student sense of belonging as measured by decreased mobility rates, increased participation in extracurricular activities, and climate survey responses indicating increased satisfaction with school climate;
- Increase community satisfaction with school reform as measured by increased parental involvement, increased indicators of shared governance, increased positive responses to school climate satisfaction surveys and increased community participation in school initiatives and activities.

Activity 2: LEAs will use annual data collected and summarized by the independent evaluator to drive modifications of the program design or implementation activities, as documented by HR2 character education revisions to the school's 5-Year Plans.

Activity 3: The SEA will host an annual statewide character education forum and a minimum of 3 state meetings annually of key personnel, state partners, and LEA partnership councils to provide technical assistance and support for initiative activities.

## **Year Four**

Objective: HR2 LEAs will continue HR2 activities but also collect post-test data for the independent evaluator who will analyze the effectiveness of HR2 goals and activities, identifying best practices and “what works” in increasing student success.

Activity 1: By January 2008 each LEA will submit to the independent evaluator post/test data for comparison with baseline planning year pre/test data to demonstrate the effects of implementation and identify best practices strategies.

Activity 2: By March 2008, the independent evaluator will complete analysis of the data as measured by submitting to the SEA, a final analysis report outlining the success of HR2 in attaining the predicted effects and identification of effective strategies and best practices.

Activity 3: By March 2008, LEAs will submit a final report to the SEA outlining successful strategies and including sample curriculum activities for each grade level, K-8.

Activity 4: Results of the data analysis and sample curriculum will be disseminated for replication and testing in other settings as measured by activities such as conferences presentations, website postings, and newspaper and television promotions.

*Criteria 3.B Diversity of perspectives brought to the project*

(a) All activities proposed under the HR2 project are founded in research. The proposal is tightly aligned with Lickona's *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* and is referenced under Criteria I to Berkowitz and Bier's "What works in Character Education", a compilation of the research in the field. (b) The members of the SEA Character Education Partnership are listed under Criteria I on page 18. This partnership provides technical assistance, professional development opportunities and support for project activities. (c) i. As the goal of the HR2 project is to maximize student success and bi-cultural competency by implementing a character education program that 1) incorporates the cultural values of Plains Indian tribes in addition to those of mainstream White cultures, and 2) teaches character competencies of middle class populations to youth whose experiences are

primarily based in poverty cultures, it is absolutely necessary to bring diversity of perspective to the project at all stages of planning and implementation. HR2 will address this challenge by recruiting partners who represent cultural and economic diversity, teachers, parents, and students (including students with disabilities and students “at risk”), private and non-private businesses and faith-based organizations. The local CPCs provide advisory assistance to the project; but the expectation is that they will also model community involvement in addition to recommending and implementing activities. For example, a business partner under the MCEP project hosted students and parents for an “evening out” at their motel. Another provided materials and space for the LEA project’s “Wall of Fame” (a student essay display documenting student, teacher or community members demonstrating outstanding examples of the Virtue of the Month). Another LEA partnership with local tribal elders created Learn and Serve mentoring projects on traditional customs.

ii. and iii. Professional development on the cultural curriculum developed under the MCEP project will be conducted. The curriculum will be infused into the existing classroom instruction during the HR2 project and be tested for effectiveness in promoting student success and bi-cultural competency. Model activities at each K-8 grade level will be compiled in year four for dissemination and replication. (d) Grant activities are linked to state academic standards, MCA 20-1-501: Indian Education for All, LEA 5-Year Plans, and school reform internal and external efforts (schools will coordinate with SEA school reform personnel to access support for their local efforts as well as disseminate information to other reform projects state-wide.) (e) The SEA will provide technical and professional assistance to the partner LEAs through the 2-day orientation meeting, host annual character education forums open to all State LEAs, facilitate a minimum of 3 annual peer meetings and conduct annual site visits. Individual communication with LEAs regarding their annual data analysis will also take place each year of the project. The SEA will keep project activities visible statewide through information on the OPI website, participation in statewide local forums, media submissions, and presentations at conferences. The SEA

Character Education Forum and SEA web page will provide resources for LEAs that are not members of the original partnership to help them in designing and establishing their own character education projects.

#### **Selection Criteria 4: QUALITY OF PROJECT EVALUATION**

Montana learned through its previous character education program experience in schools with high populations of American Indian students that traditional Anglo-based CE program materials were not completely successful. We were hampered in identifying scientifically-based alternative approaches by the extremely limited educational research available for this special population. The national research in particular routinely cited “insufficient numbers of participants” as cause for lack of inclusion of the Indian subgroup population in research studies. Development of a significant body of research has obviously also been hampered due to the fact that the pan Indian culture is non-existent. Northern plains cultures are far different from southwest Indian cultures. Western tribes differ widely from eastern tribes. Alaska has developed and tested culturally-based curriculum, but even this native group has distinguished itself as unique from other US tribes – even obtaining federal designation as a separate ethnic group. Demmert (2001) has compiled research on drop out rates of Indian children, but concludes that there is no definitive body of research that identifies corrective practices. LaFromboise (2001) has documented resiliency factors for Indian students and highlighted several differences between Native resiliency and Anglo resiliency factors, but the research ends there. Brod (2001) examines student resiliency and success from the perspective of the sociologist. The research is very thought provoking and provides unique insight into Native responsiveness, but also begs for additional research to complement the findings. Currently, some schools in Montana with high Native populations are embracing Payne’s *Framework for Poverty* (2003) as an educational strategy. Anecdotal response has been very positive, but not tested.

It is the desire of Montana's HR2 Project to add to the body of research determining best practices for Plains tribal groups.

Type of Design: Recognizing the limited number of participants available for inclusion in this special population, we propose an interrupted time series that can demonstrate casual relationships between implementation of our character education HR2 project and increased student success. A random assignment design is completely unfeasible due to the limited numbers of the sub-population. A matched comparison study is also not feasible, as each school would have to be matched with another with same demographics and cultural traditions. This situation simply does not exist in Montana. HR2 will therefore employ a pre-test-post/test design format.

**The hypothesis: Character education focused on bi-cultural competency will 1) improve school climate 2) increase student academic achievement and 3) increase school satisfaction of students, including students with disabilities, parents, school personnel and community.**

**Objective 1:** The evaluator will analyze the impact of Montana's HR2 bi-cultural character education program on student academic achievement.

Activity 1: Bi-cultural competency will be measured as the level of student success on the evaluation rubric: Rubric indicators are related to Berkowitz and Bier's "what works" factors and are also indicated by such measures as: discipline referral rates, student academic achievement, participation in extracurricular activities, student morale, and overall perceptions of school climate. Analysis will be sorted by each sub-group of participants. HR2 programmatic success will be measured by a rubric using those factors identified by Berkowitz and Bier as "what works". **(Criteria A)**

Activity 2: Parental satisfaction will be measured using a rubric based on Berkowitz & Bier's parental involvement factors and satisfaction indicators inclusive of such intervention factors as the character education room and parents' advocacy lounge.

**GPRA criteria:** The final evaluation report will use data collected over the four years of the HR2 character education project to demonstrate its effect on increasing student success. Evaluation results will be disseminated through workshop presentations at the Montana Indian Education Association Conference, Montana Education Association, the Montana Character Education Forum, postings on the SEA web site, media submissions, etc. Many of the MCEP LEAs moving into HR2 have existing partnerships with local newspapers and television stations. This press venue will be used to highlight successes and promote dissemination of replicable activities to be tested in other settings. HR2 LEAs will work with SEA school improvement programs to improve their initiative and also inform other state reform projects about bi-cultural character education. **(Criteria C)**

Activity 3: Teacher and staff satisfaction will be measured by a rubric based on programmatic infusion, Berkowitz & Bier's shared governance, participation factors and staff morale/satisfaction indicators.

Activity 4: Data will be collected in year one as pre-test baseline data. Analysis of the same data collected in each subsequent year of the project will be used to identify best practices, provide for quality assurance, and make on-going programmatic revisions and modifications as measured by inclusion in the LEA 5-Year Plan.

**(Criteria B)**

Activity 5: Post-test data collection in year four will compare results with year one baseline data to determine project success and identify "what works" as measured by statistically significant outcomes outlined in the final data analysis report.

Activity 6: By March of year four, the evaluator will submit a final report summarizing best practices and achievement of project goals. Factors included in the analysis are those same factors designated by Berkowitz and Bier. (see page 10) **(Criteria C)**

**Objective 2:** The evaluator will analyze the impact of Montana's HR2 bi-cultural competency character education program strategies as adding to the body of research on "what works" in Indian education.

Activity 1: The evaluator will submit a report to the SEA in March of year four documenting the results of the statistical significance of the pre-test/post-test analysis on the impact of Montana's HR2 project strategies as relevant to the body of research on "what works" in Indian Education, and as measured by increased student success (defined in 1.1) and increased parental satisfaction (defined in 1.2).